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What do we know about aerosol transmission?



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Some medical procedures can produce very small droplets (called aerosolized droplet nuclei or aerosols) that are able to stay suspended in the air for longer periods of time. When such medical procedures are conducted on people infected with COVID-19 in health facilities, these aerosols can contain the COVID-19 virus. These aerosols may potentially be inhaled by others if they are not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment. Therefore, it is essential that all health workers performing these medical procedures take specific airborne protection measures, including using appropriate personal protective equipment. Visitors should not be permitted in areas where such medical procedures are being performed.

There have been reported outbreaks of COVID-19 in some closed settings, such as restaurants, nightclubs, places of worship or places of work where people may be shouting, talking, or singing. In these outbreaks, aerosol transmission, particularly in these indoor locations where there are crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected persons spend long periods of time with others, cannot be ruled out. More studies are urgently needed to investigate such instances and assess their significance for transmission of COVID-19.